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UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND
REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF, AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR, THE UNFPA COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Report of the Executive Director

I. BACKGROUND

1. UNFPA requests that the programme of assistance to the South Pacific subregion be extended by one year until the end of 1997 and funding authority be increased by $3.1 million. This extension would allow the programme to complete activities already under way as part of the ongoing subregional programme and would facilitate the completion of the programming process, currently being undertaken, for the development of a new programme starting in 1998.

2. The first comprehensive UNFPA programme of assistance had been formulated using a subregional approach and was approved by the Governing Council in May 1992 for the period 1992-1996. Funding had been approved in the amount of $12.5 million, of which $10 million was to be programmed from UNFPA's regular resources and $2.5 million to be sought from a combination of UNFPA regular resources and other resources, including multi-bilateral resources. The Fund now requests the Executive Board to approve an increase of the funding approval authority by $3.1 million, which would cover approximately $1 million in over-expenditures in 1996 and $2.1 million ($1.8 million from regular resources and $300,000 from multi-bilateral sources) necessary for

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proposed activities in 1997. The proposed expenditures of $2.1 million for 1997, which is lower than average expenditures in recent years, would be utilized to continue core activities while a new programme is being developed.

3. The fourteen Pacific Island countries covered under the subregional programme comprise 1.9 million people in dispersed island countries at varying stages of economic development. Despite the small population size, these are fourteen independent countries each with their specific needs for assistance for efforts to achieve sustainable development. Of the fourteen, five countries, namely, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, fall within group "A" under UNFPA's new resource allocation categories. The Federated States of Micronesia is the only group "B" country, and Fiji is the only group "C" country. The rest of the countries -- Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau,Tokelau and Tonga -- are not categorized under the new allocation system.

4. UNFPA is the main organization providing assistance in the field of reproductive health, particularly for family planning, and for advocacy in the field of population. Australia also provides assistance in reproductive health in most parts of the region and for activities related to women in some countries. New Zealand has programmes for health and for social and economic advancement of women. UNICEF's support covers maternal and child health, basic education, food and nutrition systems, social mobilization for child survival and child monitoring, while UNDP, which has two field offices with two subregional programmes, has focused on human development and poverty alleviation, national resource management, the environment and economic and financial management reform. All the United Nations agencies work closely together and coordinate their assistance in the region.

5. In the early 1970s, UNFPA initiated its assistance to the South Pacific through country-specific projects. The current subregional programme, which was formulated on the basis of the recommendation of a programme review and strategy development (PRSD) mission in 1991, aimed at assisting the Governments of the Pacific Island countries to achieve the following five broad objectives: (a) to expand and improve the quality and accessibility of maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP) services; (b) to increase the level of awareness of population issues; (c) to improve the institutional capacity of countries to collect, process, analyse and disseminate demographic data; (d) to promote the status of women and their integration into the mainstream of development; and (e) to promote multisectoral activities with special emphasis on the environment and the sustainability of development.

6. By the end of 1995, a total amount of $9.5 million was expended ($9.3 million from regular resources and $200,000 from multi-bilateral resources contributed by the Government of Australia). The expenditure for 1996 is projected at $4 million ($2.55 million from regular resources and $1.45 million from multi-bilateral funds), for a total in 1992-1996 of $13.5 million ($11.85 million from regular and $1.65 million from multi-bilateral resources). Hence, at the end of 1996 the approved

level will have been exceeded by $1 million. This projected over-expenditure plus the request for $2.1 million ($1.8 million from regular resources and $300,000 from multi-bilateral sources) needed for the 1997 activities comprise the present request for additional funds. The proposed extension would bring the total approval authority for the period of 1992-1997 up to $15.6 million. The request for the extension and additional programme funds is being presented according to the work plan categories in effect when the original programme was approved in 1992.

7. The over-expenditure in the current programme has been incurred mostly under the sectors for MCH/FP (using the terminology of the original programme) as well as in the area of population policy formulation. UNFPA's programmatic activities created interest in the area of population through effective advocacy, generating a very favourable momentum for MCH/FP activities. Particularly since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), requests for financial and technical assistance from the Pacific Island countries have increased substantially. UNFPA provided assistance for the training of a wide range of health professionals and helped initiate population policy dialogue and policy reviews in most of the countries of the subregion.

II. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

8. In 1997, with the additionally requested funds of $2.1 million, UNFPA would continue to provide support for ongoing programme activities so that the achievements of the current programme will be further consolidated and the gains that have been made will not be jeopardized. As the requested funding level for 1997 is less than the annual expenditures in the recent years, proposed funds would be fully utilized to prevent an interruption of activities as well as to develop a new programme.

9. During the extension period, UNFPA would continue to provide assistance for the training of health professionals through both subregional and country-level training programmes. UNFPA assistance would also be used to cross-train nationals involved in the fields of health, development planning and education in order to further enhance their capability in the management, evaluation and quality control of programmes or services. UNFPA would also provide contraceptive supplies and support IEC activities in the area of reproductive health. These inputs are necessary since, in general, the subregion suffers from a shortage of qualified medical personnel in the public sector and limited accessibility to health services, particularly for reproductive health and family planning services in the outer islands. UNFPA assistance would also be used to ensure the timely referral of obstetric emergencies and pregnancy complications to secondary and tertiary levels of health care services, as this has been reported as a major problem, especially in the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati and Solomon Islands.

10. Special attention would continue to be given to the development of national capacity and the sustainability of the activities. To this end, UNFPA would provide technical assistance to conduct an

assessment of national capacity, disseminate integrated population and development planning modules, finalize population policies that are being reviewed or redrafted, train national staff in the execution of population programmes and strengthen coordination mechanisms.

11. Sectoral reviews of the current programme have been completed in 1996, and these findings will be utilized in the background paper being produced for the PRSD exercise planned in the early part of 1997, which will undertake an in-depth review and thorough assessment of the current programme. Taking into account the lessons learned from the current programme, the next programme of assistance would be developed and formulated, and its presentation to the Executive Board is planned for September 1997.

12. UNFPA proposes to extend the programme for the South Pacific through 1997 and to increase the funding approval authority by $3.1 million, which covers the projected $1 million over-expenditure and the $2.1 million ($1.8 million from regular resources and $300,000 from multi-bilateral resources) needed for proposed activities in 1997. The following table shows how the additional funds would be accommodated by programme area (in millions of $):

Sectors	Approved by Governing Council, 1992		Estimated expenditures, 1992 -1996		Amount requested for approval		Total, 1992-1997	
	Regular	Multi-bi	Regular	Multi-bi	Regular	Multi-bi	Regular	Multi-bi
Maternal & child health and family planning	3.5	1	5.3	0.92	2.8	(0.1)	6.3	0.9
Information, education and communication	2.5	0.5	2.5	0.1	0.35	(0.4)	2.85	0.1
Data collection and analysis	1.0	0.25	1.2	0.05	0.2	(0.2)	1.2	0.05
Population policy formulation	0.75	-	1.4	0.3	0.8	0.3	1.55	0.3
Women, population and development	0.75	0.25	0.35	-	(0.3)	(0.25)	0.45	-
Special programmes	1.0	0.5	0.7	0.3	(0.3)	0.1	0.7	0.6
Programme reserve*	0.5	-	0.4	-	0.1	-	0.6	-
Total	10	2.5	11.85	1.67	3.65	(0.55)	13.65	1.95

* Programme reserve was expended on multisectoral activities.

III. RECOMMENDATION

13. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve the extension of the subregional programme for the South Pacific by one additional year, to the end of 1997, and increase the funding approval authority of the programme by $3.1 million, including $2.1 million requested for proposed activities in 1997.